

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO AND DECISION OF PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE ON 6 OCTOBER 2021

REPORT

SUBJECT: West Sussex Transport Plan 2022-2036 Consultation

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DATE: September 2021
EXTN: x 37853
AREA: Planning

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

West Sussex County Council are reviewing their Local Transport Plan to update the County Council's approach to managing and investing in the transport network.

This report therefore, seeks agreement that the comments set out in this report form the basis for the Council's formal response to the West Sussex County Council document 'Draft West Sussex Transport Plan 2022-2036' (WSTP) published for consultation from Friday 16th July to Friday 8th October.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Planning Policy Committee agrees the comments set out in sections 1.8 to 1.12 of this report as the basis for Arun District Council's formal response to the consultation document 'Draft West Sussex Transport Plan 2022-2036'.

1. BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) are reviewing their Local Transport Plan (WSTP) to update the County Council's strategic approach to investment in, and management of, the transport network.
- 1.2 The draft WSTP (Background paper 1) is out for consultation between 16 July - 8 October 2021 and seeks feedback on the content and the strategies set out in the document. Subject to any response, it is anticipated that the plan will be adopted in early 2022. The current West Sussex Transport Plan 2011-2026 is available on the WSSCC web site (Background paper 2).
- 1.3 WSSCC have also published on the web site alongside the WSTP document a Sustainability Appraisal, Scoping Report, Habitats Regulation Assessment report, Evidence Base Document, and a Frequently Asked Questions document.

1.4 The WSTP set out a Vision across West Sussex which in summary, seeks a transport network that:-

- best works for communities across the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas of 'Coastal West Sussex', 'Gatwick Diamond' and 'Rural West Sussex' up to the period 2036) addressing spatial economic challenges to level up the economy and provide access to employment and services;
- achieves a path to zero net carbon by 2050 through mass electrification reduced use of fossil fuels and more and safer, walking and cycling;
- Connect communities and green environments to allow healthy lifestyles;
- Active travel opportunities and access shared transport in urban and rural areas; and
- minimises noise, pollution and 'rat-running'.

1.5 Seventeen Objectives are identified, in summary themed around:-

- A prosperous West Sussex (e.g. economic regeneration, Covid_19 recovery, levelling up, strategic investment for the future)
- A healthy West Sussex (e.g. ageing population, pollution, healthy lifestyles and access to green and blue spaces, and rural access to towns)
- A protected West Sussex (e.g. net zero carbon, adapting to climate change, protecting landscapes, the natural and built environment)
- A connected West Sussex (e.g. reduced car dependency, local living, reducing congestion, east-west community and A27, surface access to Gatwick, speed and quality of rail; West Coastway; Arun Valley; and Brighton Mainline; and bus services to towns).

1.6 To help address these objectives five strategies are formulated under the following titles:-

- Shared transport strategy (e.g. enhanced partnerships, bus priority, mobility/digital platform, areas of congestion - quality and frequency)
- Active travel strategy (e.g. new improved infrastructure, priorities suggested countywide, demand, feasibility, stakeholder support)
- Access to Gatwick Airport strategy (e.g. sustainable transport, users, community, shared transport local roads, rail connectivity, capacity, speed)
- Road network strategy (e.g. efficiency strategic routes, active travel and shared travel non-strategic routes, traffic management, parking, behaviour, speed, 'rat-running', impact on communities/environment, E-Vehicles charging, new roads integrate active travel/shared transport and only where development led or wider objectives)
- Rail strategy (e.g. promote speed, quality, coverage, rolling stock, prioritise existing lines and station improvements, better local connectivity services, level crossings and interchanges).

1.7 These are then broken down across the County in section 7 of the WSTP. What this means for the Arun strategy is set out in paragraphs 7.20 to 7.39 of the WSTP and summarised below as:-

Arun District (outside South Downs National Park)

- Improve A27 (subject to Government and Highways England decisions)
- Major multi-modal improvements on A29, A284, A259
- Improve active travel facilities linked to strategic development
- Dedicate space for shared transport
- New shared transport services linked to strategic development
- Faster rail services in the long term

Comments

- 1.8 There is much to support and commend in the overall approach and direction of the WSTP with respect to addressing climate change; net zero carbon; modal shift and electrification of transport and vehicles (and charging); emphasis on health and wellbeing; ageing population; rural accessibility; and integrating active travel walking and cycling (e.g. with transport and roads), tackling congestion, pollution and associated impacts on communities.
- 1.9 References are also welcome towards prioritising infrastructure investment (e.g. multimodal road) linked to key developments. This is particularly supported in Arun because of the spatial strategy in the Adopted Arun Local Plan 2018. This is reliant on delivering new communities within large Strategic Allocations linking with A27 and A259 east-west movement with north – south A29 and A284 connectivity, including access to the Barnham, Ford, Bognor Regis and Littlehampton rail stations, requiring strategic scale investment and integrated multi modal and active travel solutions including Dynamic Demand Responsive Transportation (DDRT e.g. dial up bus/transport services).
- 1.10 The Council is supportive of the Arun strategy in the WSTP:-

Short term (2022-27) priorities for the Arun area

- A27 Arundel Bypass (including active travel facilities)
- A29 Realignment phase 1 (including active travel facilities)
- A284 Lyminster Bypass (including active travel facilities)
- A259 Littlehampton corridor enhancement (including active travel facilities)
- A259 Bognor Regis to Littlehampton corridor enhancement (including shared transport facilities)
- DDRT and other shared transport services between Chichester, Havant, Bognor Regis and Littlehampton (connecting strategic developments in Chichester and Arun Districts)
- On-street electric vehicle charging infrastructure in Littlehampton

Medium term (2027-32) priorities for the Arun area

- A259 Chichester to Bognor Regis corridor enhancement (including shared transport and active travel facilities)
- A29 Realignment phase 2 (including active travel facilities) (development led)
- Priorities identified in the Arun Active Travel Study
- On-street electric vehicle charging infrastructure in remaining areas

Long term (2032-36) priorities for the Arun area

- Priorities identified in the Arun Active Travel Study
- Reconfigured West Coastway service
- Potential local highway capacity improvements (subject to need)

1.11 However, the Council has the following additional points and comments that would assist in adding robustness to the WSTP document and Arun strategy:-

Climate Change

- Climate change – the WSTP net zero Carbon target approach reflects current national policy and legislation – however, given many authorities in West Sussex including West Sussex County Council and Arun, have separately, declared a climate change emergency, the WSTP could signal a stronger intention to explore and exceed such targets through the role of transport in place making – particularly with the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26, Glasgow on 31 October – 12 November 2021), targets may change and the urgency for action to combat the existential threat exists now;
- Addressing air quality and pollution is also a key issue that also links to climate change where for example improved road (e.g. A27 Arundel Bypass) and rail crossing infrastructure, can help to reduce congestion, rat-running and therefore, carbon and harmful emissions within sensitive residential areas.

Spatial context

- The Council supports recognition that Arun is the most populated District in the County with the highest proportion aged 65+ and is set to grow and that modal shift because of barriers to mobility and health is an issue for the WSTP as well as this being a significant countywide issue. However, the impact on the young from covid-19 impact on the economy must also be recognised including the need to provide viable transport alternatives to the car, digital and active travel infrastructure and modal shift to encourage long term culture of health and wellbeing and reductions in carbon;
- Paragraph 7.23 recognises the importance for Arun's economy to improve and refers to efforts focussing on town centre regeneration in Bognor Regis and Littlehampton, the role of Butlins and recently expanded University campus in Bognor Regis. While this is supported including role of the visitor economy and education sectors, there should also be recognition of the specific planned delivery of 'Enterprise Bognor Regis' Strategic employment allocation and the role of Rolls Royce and the LEC Airfield employment area, focussed on the junction of the A29 and the A259. The strategic importance of opening up and servicing this land to provide locally accessible jobs and business diversification and skills and a reduced need for outward commuting in Arun, should have a greater emphasis in the WSTP. This is particularly relevant given the recognition of linking new road and transport infrastructure with development – to deliver 'local living' green communities and places, not just housing.

Transport context

- Support WSTP recognition for the six railway stations: Bognor Regis, Barnham, Ford, Littlehampton, Arundel and Angmering; and that journey times to London have improved over recent years (with introduction of Thameslink services from Littlehampton) but that there is no direct rail link between Bognor Regis and Chichester or between Arundel and West Coastway. The WSTP considers that this presents opportunities for shared transport and active travel modes to cater for journeys between these towns. However, while this is supported – the WSTP should also include the Council’s aspiration to see the Arundel Chord railway line included in the Arun strategy (e.g. this should include reviewing evidence studies examining journey times and value for money, based on railway stations within Arun e.g. Angmering to Horsham via the Arun Valley Line currently takes 1 hour via Barnham or Three Bridges).

Transport strategy – Arun

- Support the key road and junction based deliverables included to help unlock east-west bottlenecks and connectivity to alternative north-south routes within Arun during peak congestion (e.g. the A27 junctions/Arundel bypass and A259 improvements and Bognor Regis to Littlehampton corridor enhancements, including A29 and A284 improvements etc). However, more clarity could be provided on resolving the rail crossing congestion and role of a Bridge at Ford in support of the Arun Local Plan development strategy.
- The WSTP acknowledges the mutual interdependencies for delivering the Arun and Chichester strategic allocations (in respect of adopted and emerging Local Plans) based on the planned A27 junction improvements. However, viability and scheme cost are emergent issues for this particular A27 corridor that make it more likely that these will not be deliverable without external funding sources. The WSTP should include reference to this ‘live issue’ in order for the partnership and advocacy approach (e.g. with highways England and DfT) to be developed.
- Returned s.106 payments needed to mitigate junction improvements e.g. on the A27 is also a ‘live issue’ where a lack of scheme design and enhancement capability can lead to s.106 being returned to developers or not received.
- The emphasis on modal shift and active travel (i.e. Arun’s Active Travel Study priorities) together with parking demand management, is supported including working with strategic partners to deliver faster rail services from Barnham to Brighton and the Solent cities in the long term. However, there is also a need for station improvements such as at Barnham and Ford to serve planned growth and to boost ‘in situ parking capacity’ to complement demand management and avoid displaced on street parking conflicts with shared road space/active travel.
- Ford also has a particular need for platform safety improvements in view of a planned Secondary School to serve BEW, Ford and Yapton communities and Strategic Allocations.

CONCLUSIONS

1.12 Arun District Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the WSTP. This reports sets out the council's formal comments and supports the WSTP approach subject to the comments and clarifications sought above.

2. PROPOSAL(S):

That the Planning Policy Committee agrees the comments set out in paragraphs 1.8 to 1.12 of the report as the basis for the Council's formal response to the WSTP consultation.

3. OPTIONS:

8.1 That the Planning Policy Committee:-
a) agreed the response or b) the response is not agreed.

4. CONSULTATION:

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council		X
Relevant District Ward Councillors		X
Other groups/persons (please specify)		X
5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 below)	YES	NO
Financial		X
Legal		X
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		X
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act		X
Sustainability	X	
Asset Management/Property/Land		X
Technology		X
Other (please explain)		X

6. IMPLICATIONS:

This response will help to identify and promote the priorities for investment in transport infrastructure to be included within West Sussex County Council's LTP and funding programmes in order to support delivery of the adopted Arun Local Plan.

7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:

The Council needs to respond to a formal public consultation by West Sussex County Council which is the Highway Authority responsible for updating the LTP, to ensure that future transport infrastructure and investment is sustainable and addresses the need for mitigating the impact of development in order to serve the communities in Arun.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Background Paper 1: WSCC LTP i.e. WSTP consultation

<https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/9868/widgets/28223/documents/13943>

Background paper 2 current WSCC LTP

https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/3042/west_sussex_transport_plan_2011-2026_low_res.pdf